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Letter dated 19 November 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 19 November 1999, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 63 and 116, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Şafak GÖKTÜRK
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Letter dated 19 November 1999 from Mr. Aytuğ Plümer addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 2 November 1999, addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative at the United Nations (A/54/523-S/1999/1121), and its annex which contain allegations regarding Greek Cypriots residing in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

The Greek Cypriot representative has made false and misleading complaints about the living conditions of Greek Cypriots in Northern Cyprus.

The living standards of Greek Cypriots as well as Maronites are on a par with those of Turkish Cypriots in the area. Every effort is being made by our authorities to ensure the continued well-being of Greek Cypriots and Maronites in full cooperation with the United Nations authorities in Cyprus. This close cooperation is appreciated by the United Nations authorities and is also mentioned in the reports of the Secretary-General on Cyprus. In recent years, all necessary measures have been taken to provide Maronites and Greek Cypriots living in Northern Cyprus with better services in all areas. This has been confirmed by the two most recent reports of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus (see S/1998/1149 dated 7 December 1998, para. 16, and S/1999/657 dated 8 June 1999, para. 9).

In spite of the above-mentioned factual situation in Northern Cyprus, the Greek Cypriot representative has tried to paint a completely different picture with respect to Greek Cypriots and Maronites in Northern Cyprus. In view of the gross distortion of facts, I wish to set the record straight on this matter.

All Greek Cypriots and Maronites living in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are accorded the same rights and facilities as those accorded to other residents without any discrimination. For instance, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus provides free elementary and secondary education to all its citizens. Greek Cypriot and Maronite children resident in Northern Cyprus are free to attend these schools if they wish to do so. Greek Cypriots in the Karpas area also have their own elementary schools where children are taught by Greek Cypriot teachers with books supplied by the Greek Cypriot side.

With respect to health facilities, currently two health centres in the Karpas region and two health centres in the Koruçam (Kormakiti) region provide free medical services to all residents including Greek Cypriots and Maronites. If and when necessary, patients may be transferred to the main regional State hospitals providing wider facilities. Greek Cypriots and Maronites can, upon request, be transferred to the South or may travel abroad for treatment.

With respect to practice of religion, there is complete freedom of worship in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus which is a secular State. Greek Cypriots and Maronites living in Northern Cyprus can visit Apostolos Andreas Monastery and other religious shrines freely throughout the year. Greek

Cypriots living in Southern Cyprus can visit the Monastery three times each year on religious holidays. It is expected that some 800 Greek Cypriots will visit the Monastery on 30 November 1999.

In addition to the above, Greek Cypriots and Maronites benefit from the same communication facilities available to Turkish Cypriots, and have access to all press, television and other mass media without any restrictions. Greek Cypriots and Maronites living in Northern Cyprus are free to visit all areas open to the public without any restrictions.

The above-mentioned prevailing normal situation in Northern Cyprus, however, is in sharp contrast with the dire living conditions of the Turkish Cypriots currently residing in the South. Over the years, illegal detention, torture and forcible expulsion of Turkish Cypriots residing in South Cyprus has become an administrative practice of the Greek Cypriot regime. Turkish Cypriots have been subjected to severe harassment and discrimination. The Greek Cypriot police restricts the freedom of movement of Turkish Cypriots in the South for surveillance purposes.

During April 1994, 22 Turkish Cypriots including women and children were subjected to beating and other forms of coercion at various police stations in the South and were forcibly expelled across the United Nations buffer zone. One of the expelled persons, Tufansoy, returned to the South but was later brutally murdered along with another Turkish Cypriot, Ertuğrul Akburç, in South Cyprus. Can Necip Hakyemez, also a Turkish Cypriot, was gunned down in August 1997. Erkan Eğmez, a Turkish Cypriot resident of Akincilar village, was abducted in October 1995 by the Greek Cypriot police while working in his fields located in the United Nations-controlled buffer zone. Eğmez was subsequently tortured. A medical examination of the victim confirmed that there were severe scars, bruises and swelling on his body resulting from clubbing and beating. After a two-month ordeal, Eğmez was released and returned to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Regrettably, the plight of the Turkish Cypriots living in the South continues unabated to this day. The Turkish Cypriot side would like to seize this opportunity to express the hope that all necessary steps will be taken to bring an end to the unacceptable living conditions of Turkish Cypriots living in the South, and to ensure personal security of life to all concerned.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 63 and 116, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Aytuğ PLÜMER
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus